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## Reading the Greuze Girl: The Daughter's Seduction

TRAVELING THROUGH NEW ENGLAND IN January 1781, the chevalier de Chastellux spent a night at Mr. Dewy's inn in Sheffield, Massachusetts. "My inn gave me pleasure the moment I entered it," he reported, "the master and mistress of the house appeared polite and well-educated, but I admired above all a girl of twelve years old, who had all the beauty of her age, and whom Greuze would have been happy to have taken for a model, when he painted his charming picture of the young girl crying for the loss of her canary bird."<sup>1</sup> A few days later, Chastellux returned to Dorrance's tavern, in Voluntown, Connecticut, where he had stayed the previous July shortly after his arrival with the French expeditionary force sent to fight the British. He observed that twenty-year-old Miss Dorrance, who, at the time of his earlier visit, had been pregnant by a young man who had vanished after promising to marry her, had since given birth.

Her noble and commanding countenance seemed more changed by misfortune than by suffering; yet every body about her was employed in consoling and taking care of her; her mother, seated by her, held in her arms the infant, smiling at it, and caressing it; but, as for her, her eyes were sorrowfully fixed upon the little innocent, eying it with interest, but without pleasure. . . . Never did a more interesting or more moral picture exercise the pencil of a Greuze, or the pen of a tender poet. May that man be banished from the bosom of society who could be so barbarous as to leave this amiable girl a prey to the misfortune that it is in his power to repair.<sup>2</sup>

When Chastellux's account of his travels was published in France, he suppressed the name of Dorrance and added a footnote justifying himself for having identified the family in the original edition printed in the United States.<sup>3</sup> What those who had criticized him for exposing the girl's shame failed to appreciate was that he had only wanted to "give an idea of American manners,

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**ABSTRACT** This essay challenges the generally accepted interpretation of Greuze's *Young Girl Weeping over Her Dead Bird* (1765) as an allegory of lost virginity by considering the painting in relation to eighteenth-century representations of the young girl in a range of discourses. The central contention is that the implied spectator to whom the picture is addressed is a quasi-paternal figure who disavows his own desire for the girl whilst nevertheless enjoying an eroticized intimacy with her. In thereby raising the specter of incest even as it represses it, the painting exemplifies deep-seated tensions within later eighteenth-century French culture. **REPRESENTATIONS** 117. Winter 2012 © The Regents of the University of California. ISSN 0734-6018, electronic ISSN 1533-855X, pages 86–119. All rights reserved. Direct requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content to the University of California Press at <http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintinfo.asp>. DOI: 10.1525/rep.2012.117.1.86.

which he is certainly very far from satirizing.” In a country where “morals are so far in their infancy,” he explained, “the commerce between two free persons is deemed less censurable, than the infidelities, the caprices, and even the coquetries, which destroy the peace of many European families.”<sup>4</sup> In any case, he added, Miss Dorrance’s story ended happily, as her lover returned to marry her.

In their passing references to Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1810), the passages just quoted attest to the contemporary fame of the artist’s pictures of young girls, which have since come to be collectively known as the “Greuze girl.”<sup>5</sup> Chastellux takes for granted that these works will be no less familiar to his readers than the portraits of Anthony Van Dyck and the landscapes of Salvator Rosa, which he cites elsewhere in his text. More specifically, the first reference indicates that a late eighteenth-century spectator did not necessarily subscribe to the now standard interpretation of *Young Girl Weeping over Her Dead Bird* (fig. 1) as an allegory of lost virginity. It serves here rather as an appropriate point of reference for describing a beautiful young girl, whose innocence is in no way threatened. Nevertheless, as the second reference demonstrates, Chastellux was certainly aware of the erotic dimension of the Greuze girl; his understanding of this type of picture is informed by a consciousness of such a girl’s vulnerability to seduction. In presenting his readers with “the affecting sight” of the “interesting and weak victim,” he affirms that the appropriate response is not simply pity for her plight but also a desire to console her and even to remedy the situation. There is no doubt an element of hypocrisy in his emphasis on the moral character of the scene since he reveals himself to have a keen appreciation of female charms, despite claiming that his advancing years (he was in fact forty-six) only permit him to view beauty with a “philosophic eye.”<sup>6</sup> Also significant, however, is the connection that he draws between the Greuze girl and the primitive simplicity (as he sees it) of “American manners [*moeurs*].” Chastellux thereby aligns these paintings with a project of social regeneration, which helped to shape and was in turn encouraged by his idealized vision of America.<sup>7</sup>

For my purposes, the interest of these passages lies in the new perspectives that they open up for interpreting *Young Girl Weeping over Her Dead Bird* and the potential they contain for illuminating the Greuze girl more generally. Almost without exception, the many modern scholars who have discussed this work, bringing to bear on it concerns as various as word-image relations and the history of sexuality, have taken their cue from the famous commentary on the painting in Denis Diderot’s *Salon de 1765*, where it was first suggested that the dead bird should be understood as a symbol of lost virginity. The aim here is to challenge the status of this text as the key to the meaning of the image, while also demonstrating that its persuasiveness is owed in large part to the shared cultural assumptions that can be seen to inform it. The overall goal is to present a more nuanced and better historicized interpretation



FIGURE 1. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Young Girl Weeping over Her Dead Bird*, 1765.  
Oil on canvas, 52 × 45.6 cm. National Gallery of Scotland,  
Edinburgh. © Photo Scala, Florence.

of *Weeping Girl* (*La Pleureuse*), as it immediately became known, one that attends to the different ways in which contemporary spectators such as Chastellux made sense of the painting and appropriated it to their own purposes.<sup>8</sup> In seeking to characterize the mixture of innocence and experience that constitutes the defining feature of the Greuze girl, subsequent commentators have reached for literary points of reference from their own epoch, whether it be the “perverse child-woman” of nineteenth-century decadence or, in recent decades, the disturbingly ambiguous figure of Nabokov’s *Lolita*.<sup>9</sup> My contention is that this type of picture needs instead to be read in relation to

distinctively eighteenth-century representations of the young girl in a range of discourses, including aesthetic theory, sentimental fiction, and medical literature. On the basis of this interpretative framework, I will argue that the cultural significance of the Greuze girl resides in the implied relationship with a quasi-paternal spectator, who disavows his own desire for the girl while nevertheless enjoying an eroticized intimacy with her. In constructing a viewing relationship that verges on the incestuous, this type of image closely parallels the treatment of the incest theme by writers of the period, most notably Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Among Greuze's many paintings of youthful female figures, *Weeping Girl* stands out as the quintessential example of the genre. A bust-length composition in an oval format, it shows a female figure leaning her head on one hand and looking down at her dead pet, which lies supine on top of its cage. The warm tones and smooth finish of her plump flesh make the girl appear vividly palpable, while the tight framing of the head and shoulders creates a sense of physical proximity, offering the spectator the illusion of unmediated access to her presence. The composition is pared down even by comparison with a previous version of the same subject, dated 1757, which depicts a half-length figure holding the bird in her right hand (fig. 2).<sup>10</sup> In repeating it, Greuze was falling back on a readily saleable type of picture, no doubt prompted by the difficulty he had in finding a buyer for *Filial Piety*, a large and ambitious moral tableau that he had exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1763.<sup>11</sup> When the second version of *Weeping Girl* was exhibited to great acclaim at the next Salon, two years later, it had already been sold to Alexis-Janvier de La Live de la Briche, whose family had made their fortune from tax farming. He was a brother of one of Greuze's most important early patrons, the *amateur* Ange-Laurent de La Live de Jully, who himself owned two of the artist's earlier paintings of young girls: *The Wool Winder* and *The Laundress* (fig. 3).<sup>12</sup> However, the 1765 painting represents a shift away from the modern dress and mundane domesticity of these works toward a vaguely classical idiom; the simple white muslin draped around the girl's shoulders abstracts her from any definite social milieu, while her head-in-hand pose recalls an allegory of melancholy.<sup>13</sup>

However, *Weeping Girl* differs from such personifications both in the intensity of the figure's sorrow and in the presence of its ostensible cause. The subject, for which no direct pictorial precedent exists, may derive from Catullus's poem describing the tears shed by his mistress on the death of her pet sparrow.<sup>14</sup> The painting shares with this text an exaggeratedly mournful atmosphere; garlanded with flowers and dark within, the cage on which the dead bird lies resembles a funeral bier or a tomb. It was the apparently excessive nature of the girl's grief that prompted Diderot to spell out his suspicions about its real cause: "Why this dreamy, melancholy air? What, all this for a



FIGURE 2. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Young Girl Weeping over the Death of Her Bird*, 1757. Oil on canvas, 71 × 60 cm. Private collection. © Christie's Images Limited.

bird!" he asks; "Come child, open your heart to me, tell me what it is." Having elaborated a narrative of seduction, purportedly coaxed out of the girl herself, he remarks that Greuze had already painted the same subject in *The Broken Mirror* (fig. 4): "Don't you think it would be as stupid to attribute the tears of the girl in this Salon at the loss of her bird, as the melancholy of the girl in the previous Salon to her broken mirror?"<sup>15</sup> Such a reading of *Weeping Girl* derives support from a long tradition of using birds as sexual symbols, notably in seventeenth-century Dutch painting. However, as Elise Goodman





FIGURE 3. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Laundress*, 1761. Oil on canvas, 40.6 × 31.7 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

has argued, they tend to function in eighteenth-century French art in a more subtle, allusive way, as tokens of love rather than as emblems of male genitalia.<sup>16</sup> In other traditions, the bird signifies the human soul, which flies away at death. Hence both the bird and the bird cage can signify loss in a wholly nonerotic way, as, for example, in Jean-Baptiste Pigalle's much admired *Child with a Cage* (fig. 5), which shows a small boy bereft at the loss of his pet; the sculptor apparently intended to include the dead bird lying beside the empty cage, but the idea was presumably rejected by the patron as too gloomy.<sup>17</sup>

In the case of *Weeping Girl*, moreover, the tightly framed composition renders the symbolism much more opaque than it is in *The Broken Mirror*, in



FIGURE 4. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Broken Mirror*, 1763. Oil on canvas, 56 × 45.6 cm. The Wallace Collection, London. Photo: Bridgeman Art Library.

which the young woman's disheveled state, the disorder of her surroundings, and such erotically charged details as a pearl necklace and an open letter all reinforce the sexual significance of the subject.<sup>18</sup> By isolating the figure, Greuze introduces an element of open-endedness that encourages spectators to play an active role in the construction of the painting's meaning by offering their own conjectures as to the significance of the scene. At the same time, by depicting a dead bird (rather than one that has escaped from its cage, as was usual in amorous birding scenes), he endows the composition with a heightened emotional resonance. Thus, even as Diderot accounts for the girl's grief by insisting on the sexual subtext, he also invests



FIGURE 5. Jean-Baptiste Pigalle,  
*Child with a Cage*, 1750. Marble,  
 47 × 32 × 34 cm. Musée du Louvre,  
 Paris. © RMN/Rights reserved.



the bird with a new layer of affective meaning, since, in his version of events, it was a present from her lover and has died because she forgot, in her anxiety about the young man's intentions, to feed and water it. Despite being sure that she is too old to be crying over the death of the bird, he admits to uncertainty about the girl's age: "Her head is fifteen to sixteen, and her arm and hand eighteen to nineteen," he claims.<sup>19</sup> The ambiguity of her largely invisible body also allowed for the more innocent, though still eroticized, reading of another critic, Charles-Joseph Mathon de la Cour, who thought she was only ten or eleven years old. He initially objected that her grief was "too vivid and too profound" for its ostensible cause, only to reach the conclusion that she is

at the age when the need to love makes one focus on the first object that presents itself. One is strongly attached to it without knowing why. Until chance offers a more interesting object that will fill the void in her heart, the need to love often exercises itself with a spaniel or bird.<sup>20</sup>

In this context, it is significant that her dead pet is a canary (it would once have been yellow, but has since discolored, as has the foliage), a popular cage bird conventionally associated with women and children. Writers often represented the devotion they inspired in their female owners as disproportionate,

even complaining that women neglected their human lovers in favor of the beloved bird; one poem described how a lady mourned the death of hers for over a year, while in his widely read *Histoire naturelle* Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, characterized “the fondness . . . of a woman for her canary, of a child for its toy” as “unthinking,” “a blind feeling.”<sup>21</sup>

Thus, in *Weeping Girl*, the dead bird functions not so much as a conventionalized sexual symbol as an index of a tenderly affectionate nature whilst also offering spectators so inclined an erotic subtext concerning the transition from childhood to womanhood. For the majority of Salon visitors, it seems to have been the straightforwardly affective response that prevailed at the expense of any deeper meaning. On Diderot’s account, what he regarded as its real subject was “so subtle that many people didn’t understand it,”<sup>22</sup> while Mathon described the picture’s reception in far more positive terms:

Connoisseurs, women, fops, pedants, the learned, the ignorant and the foolish, all the spectators are in agreement over this painting. One thinks that one is seeing nature, one shares the grief of this girl, one wishes to console her.<sup>23</sup>

In short, *Weeping Girl* seemed to require no decoding, no familiarity with other images, but was instead apprehended as a transparent sign, one that everybody saw in the same way and which made them feel identical emotions.<sup>24</sup> Crucial to this model of the spectator’s experience is not only the sense of unmediated access to the girl’s presence that the painting offers but also the use of the emotive motif of the dead bird to shift the burden of expression away from the face. This made it possible to avoid the academic conventions for depicting emotion that (as critics complained) all too easily slipped into a grimace.<sup>25</sup> Instead, the girl’s bowed head, closed eyes and hand over one side of her face, together with a faint blurring of those of her facial features that are visible, mean that the immediacy of her presence is counteracted by an emotional withdrawal, a sense of inwardness. Without the dead bird to guide the spectator’s response to the image, one might almost think she was asleep. In her obliviousness to her surroundings and the way that this unselfconsciousness serves at once to exclude and to engage the spectator, Greuze’s *Weeping Girl* exemplifies the paradoxical effects of what Michael Fried has termed the absorptive states depicted by French artists of this period.<sup>26</sup>

For the Salon critics, this inwardness and unselfconsciousness were summed up by the notion of grace, which a number of them applied to the weeping girl; Diderot later complained that versions of the subject by other artists lacked this crucial quality.<sup>27</sup> The connotations of the term had recently been elucidated in the “Refléxions” that accompany Claude-Henri Watelet’s poem, *L’Art de peindre*. Like La Live de Jully, the author was an *amateur* who had supported Greuze in the early years of his career; the artist’s portrait of him was also exhibited in 1765.<sup>28</sup> “Grace,” Watelet explains, “is born out of

the harmony between the feelings of the soul and the actions of the body.” Childhood and youth are the “ages of grace,” because, in them, the soul expresses itself in a free and uncomplicated manner. He then offers some examples: “Naivety, ingenuous curiosity, the desire to please, spontaneous joy, regret, and the sorrow and tears occasioned by the loss of something much loved can all produce grace, as they are all simple movements.” In short, Greuze’s weeping girl (whom critics also described as naive) could be seen to embody the spontaneous, unselfconscious emotional life of a child by those spectators who, like Mathon and Chastellux, identified her as one. But Watelet’s discussion also makes clear that she would not exemplify grace so well were she not also an attractive young woman. He goes on:

The female sex, suppler in its movements, more sensitive in its affections, where the desire to please arises as though of its own accord, as part of nature’s great system, renders beauty more interesting, and when it escapes artifice and affectation, conveys grace in the most seductive manner that it is given to us to imagine.<sup>29</sup>

Particularly significant here is Watelet’s use of the term, “interesting” (*intéressante*); another influential *amateur*, the comte de Caylus, also suggested that grace gave all a young woman’s actions an “intensified interest.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, the unselfconscious grace of a beautiful woman was thought to engage the spectator far more than one who self-consciously displayed her charms. In sum, grace was a moral as well as an aesthetic category; as conceptualized by Watelet, it is centrally bound up with the valorization of nature as a positive term.

As regards *Weeping Girl*, the use of the term to characterize the painting suggests that it was held to embody a particular female type. Significantly, Greuze gives much greater emphasis to the figure’s youthful innocence and simplicity than he does in his earlier treatment of the subject. Whereas her counterpart in the 1757 painting is dark and wears a relatively elaborate dress in a deep pink and a pearl necklace, in the 1765 painting she has childishly fair hair, simple white garments and no adornment but flowers. Mathon spelled out the significance of these features:

Her blond locks are artlessly tied up in a ribbon; a muslin neckerchief is draped negligently over her shoulders. The care of her appearance no longer concerns her; she is wholly preoccupied by her sorrow.<sup>31</sup>

Diderot, by contrast, was struck by her elegance, while also emphasizing the inwardness of her state: “Her grief is profound, she is absorbed by her misfortune, she is entirely given over to it.” Having offered his account of the reasons for her distress, he concludes by exclaiming: “How beautiful she is! How interesting!”<sup>32</sup> For Diderot, this latter term served primarily to connote the rich interior drama, the intense emotional life, that he so admired in the

novels of Samuel Richardson, which, he declared in his eulogy of the novelist, embodied an essential humanity. He associates it especially with the spectacle of a woman in distress, such as the heroine of Richardson's *Clarissa*, after she is raped and the same author's Clementina (from the novel *Sir Charles Grandison*) in her madness. The latter is "so interesting," Diderot explains, because, despite being incapable of self-control, she nevertheless "says nothing that does not display candor and innocence."<sup>33</sup> What makes Greuze's weeping girl "interesting" then are the signs of distress that allow her body to be read as a transparent vehicle for her innocent heart. Diderot's praise for this figure is exemplary of sentimentalism's fascination with the natural bodily eloquence of the virtuous and beautiful heroine.

As well as testifying to her essential innocence, the unselfconscious grief of the weeping girl exposes her to the voyeuristic gaze of the male spectator, as Diderot makes clear by going into raptures over various parts of her body: "Oh! What a beautiful hand! Such a beautiful hand! Such a beautiful arm."<sup>34</sup> A fundamental tension clearly exists within this construction of femininity between the moral qualities for which the heroine is admired and the way her suffering is staged as an eroticized spectacle. Even when not in a state of distress, such a young woman is subjected to the male gaze, on account of the very unselfconsciousness that distinguishes her from those who overtly display their charms. In his hugely successful novel, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, published in 1761, for example, Rousseau condemns the low-cut bodices and rouged cheeks of fashionable Parisian women, along with their bold stares, which (so he claims) disconcert the unhabituated male spectator.<sup>35</sup> His heroine, by contrast, was described in terms that could apply just as well to *Weeping Girl*:

Blonde, a sweet, tender, modest, enchanting countenance. Natural grace, without the least affectation; an elegant simplicity, even a little negligence in her dress, which suits her better than a more arranged look . . . her chest covered as befits a modest girl, not a sanctimonious prude.<sup>36</sup>

In pictorial terms, "modesty" translates as the lowered gaze the weeping girl shares with her counterpart in *The Broken Mirror*. The vulnerability of this type of figure to the male gaze is well attested by the responses to Greuze's great Salon success of 1761, *The Marriage Contract* (fig. 6). On the one hand, the critics commended the bride for her modesty whilst, on the other, they took a frank relish in her voluptuous form.<sup>37</sup> The ambiguous mixture of eroticism and moralism that characterizes the sentimental construction of a youthful and innocent femininity thus engenders a similarly ambivalent response on the part of the viewing subject. It is exemplified, in the case of *Weeping Girl*, by Diderot's initial declaration: "One would approach that hand and kiss it, if one did not respect this child and her grief."<sup>38</sup>



FIGURE 6. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Marriage Contract*, 1761. Oil on canvas, 92 × 117 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. © Photo Scala, Florence.

In short, Greuze's painting obliges the spectator to negotiate the tension between the ease of access to the girl's body that it offers and the ethical prohibition against taking advantage of her youth, innocence, and distress. Diderot eventually abandons the effort, confessing: "I don't like to be the cause of suffering, but, all the same, I wouldn't mind too much being the cause of her troubles."<sup>39</sup> However, rather than taking this as an acknowledgment of the "true" meaning, it is important to register that his confession is addressed specifically to *mon ami*, that is, Friedrich Melchior, Baron von Grimm, the editor of the *Correspondance littéraire*, for which Diderot wrote his art criticism, very much as one man of the world to another, and would have been accessible only to its highly select foreign readership.<sup>40</sup> By contrast, addressing a nameless interlocutor who stands in for the public as a whole, Mathon took care to disavow any such desire, declaring:

It is impossible for me, Monsieur, to convey to you the extreme emotion that this figure has caused me. . . . Several times I have spent whole hours considering her attentively; I have become intoxicated by that sweet and tender sadness that is better than sensual pleasure; and I have left penetrated by a delicious melancholy.<sup>41</sup>

Also relevant in this context is Watelet's discussion of grace, which concludes by considering the varying effects made on three spectators by the embodiment of grace that is the perfect *jeune fille*. They are, respectively, "an indifferent man," that is to say, the disinterested observer; her father, whose affection makes him "a hundred times more perceptive and more sensitive to the graces of his daughter than the disinterested man"; and a young man, whose love is reciprocated. In imagining the young couple meeting in "the most agreeable [setting] that nature can offer," united in their youthful beauty and mutual attraction, Watelet collapses the distance between subject and object to produce an idyllic evocation of the perfect union of innocent souls.<sup>42</sup> In other words, for a mature male spectator who takes more than a detached interest in the *jeune fille*, the only available, certainly the only legitimate, subject position was that of a father figure.

It is in the light of this model of the spectator's relationship to the young girl that Diderot's fictive conversation with Greuze's weeping girl needs, I propose, to be read. Significantly, in an otherwise damning review of *L'Art de peindre*, he had praised highly the section on the "innocent and naive young girl."<sup>43</sup> Like Watelet, he identifies the girl as a pastoral figure, even though there is nothing in the painting (apart perhaps from the flowers) so much as to hint at a rural setting. The painting puts him in mind of the *Idylls* of the Swiss writer Salomon Gessner, which appeared in French translation in 1762 and were admired for their evocation of a rustic life of prelapsarian innocence: "What a pretty elegy! What a pretty poem! What a fine idyll Gessner would make of it. It could serve as an illustration for a piece by this poet."<sup>44</sup> Diderot goes on to weave around the painting a pastoral romance of his own, in which he temporarily suppresses his erotic interest in the girl in order to present himself as a father figure. On the face of it, admittedly, he refuses the paternal role, telling her: "I am not your father. I am neither indiscreet nor severe." However, since the cast of characters he has invented does not include the girl's father but only her mother, whose absence supposedly led to her lapse, these words suggest that the writer is stepping in to fill a gap in her life by acting as the loving, understanding father figure that she needs. In assuring the girl that her lover will keep the promise he made to her and implicitly aligning himself with the boy's own father, whose house he claims just to have visited, Diderot effectively assumes the role played by the father in *The Marriage Contract*, who hands over his daughter's dowry to her fiancé. In short, the critic (who took his responsibility to marry off his own daughter very seriously), seems to be seeking to ensure that the girl's story will end happily, in the security of marriage, like Miss Dorrance's.

Far from being purely an imaginative projection on Diderot's part, the narrative that he comes up with is informed by the fundamental conditions of feminine existence within a patriarchal society, in the context of which



not only he but also other contemporary spectators would have understood *Weeping Girl*. More specifically, it is the social practice of the exchange of women, as it has been theorized first by Claude Lévi-Strauss and subsequently by feminist scholars, that produces the category of the *jeune fille*.<sup>45</sup> This category is defined, first and foremost, by her relation to her family and, above all, to her father; since the word *fille* primarily means daughter, the extension of its meaning to signify “girl” from the sixteenth century onwards served to deny young women an autonomous existence. The *jeune fille* is further defined by the marriage that awaits her; according to the dictionaries of the period, the term refers to a female who is not yet married.<sup>46</sup> Her destiny is to be handed over from father to husband with her dowry, like the bride in *The Marriage Contract*, in which the transfer of the dowry is the focal point of the composition. Far from being partner in the transaction, she is a purely passive object of exchange or, indeed, as Rousseau’s Julie complains in an uncharacteristic moment of defiance, a commodity (*une marchandise*).<sup>47</sup> In the context of ancien régime France, the exchange of women was grounded in a juridical system based on the law of contract. It is this system that helps to explain the obsession with female virginity that pervades the fiction of the period. In its terms, the deflowering of an unmarried girl was not so much a sin against chastity (as in Christian morality) as an offence against the authority of her father. The *jeune fille* holds her own virginity in trust, as something she is required to preserve untouched; it is, to quote Julie again, “such a dangerous deposit,” dangerous, that is, in so far as its guardian may be seduced into disposing of it without her father’s consent.<sup>48</sup>

What Greuze does in *Weeping Girl* then is dramatize the vulnerability to seduction (including what would now be called rape) that was central to the identity of the *jeune fille* as she was elaborated as a cultural stereotype in eighteenth-century France.<sup>49</sup> His narrative strategy resembles that of the sentimental novels of the period, relying as it does on uncertainty. Just as readers would have been anxious to learn the reasons for the heroine’s plight and the outcome of her story, so Greuze leaves spectators to wonder about these questions. It is thus likely that they would have interpreted the painting with reference to their reading of such novels, as well as to conventional wisdom about young girls. If the weeping girl’s distress is indeed caused by an errant lover, as Diderot assumed, her chances of marriage strongly depend on whether she remains within the moral order of the patriarchal family, like Rousseau’s Julie, who refuses to leave *la maison paternelle* to elope with Saint-Preux, or whether, like the heroine of Diderot’s own novel, *La Religieuse*, she is a fatherless girl without a home.<sup>50</sup> The tightly framed composition of *Weeping Girl* means that we cannot tell what her situation is, but this very vagueness allows for the optimistic scenario outlined by Diderot.

*The Broken Mirror* is less encouraging; not only does the disorder of the room indicate that this girl's loss of innocence is far-reaching, but its elegance suggests an urban milieu rather than the safety of the countryside, where the heroine's family home is invariably situated. Although there are inevitably significant differences between image and text, this scene may be compared to one in *Clarissa*, which takes place after Lovelace entraps the heroine into accompanying him to London, where he rapes her. Having been arrested for debt, she is imprisoned in a squalid room, the decrepit state of which attests to the loss not just of her virginity but of everything of value in her life. Among the furnishings is

an old looking-glass, cracked through the middle, breaking out into a thousand points; the crack given it, perhaps in a rage, by some poor creature to whom it gave the representation of his heart's woes in his face.<sup>51</sup>

Symbolizing here what Lovelace later calls "an incurable fracture in her heart," the broken mirror can stand for the fallen condition at once of the unhappy individual and of the world as a whole.<sup>52</sup> Like the dead bird, it is not reducible to a purely sexual symbol.

What is being mourned in *The Broken Mirror* and, even more so, in *Weeping Girl* can thus be understood not just as lost virginity but also as a more general loss of innocence, a concern with which pervades so much of the literature of the second half of the eighteenth century. As has already been noted, the 1765 painting was described by Diderot as an elegy fit to be made into an idyll by Gessner, a poet whose work is suffused by just such a melancholy awareness of the gulf between the prelapsarian world he describes and the fallen state of the modern world.<sup>53</sup> In its gentle pathos, *Weeping Girl* is continuous with Greuze's large-scale tableaux, in which the harmony of family life is typically represented as being threatened by the loss of one of its members, whether as a result of a daughter's imminent departure from home on her marriage, as in *The Marriage Contract*, or of the approaching death of an aged father, as in *Filial Piety*.<sup>54</sup> More generally, in contemporary literature, the sentimental tableau is structured by just such a defining absence, generally that of a loved one who is absent or dead, which serves to draw in the spectator or reader to share in their loss. Such a tableau typically contains a sign that stands in for the missing part of the whole, such as an object that belonged to or was a gift from that person. (*The Marriage Contract* and *Filial Piety* respectively center on the handing over of a money bag and the offering of a pet bird, both of which can be seen to accord with this substitutive logic). Since they represent in solidified or even quantified form the currents of tender feeling that unite human beings, these objects have a fetishistic character. Moreover, in so far as it depends on the power of fragments to suggest a lost whole, the tableau itself can (as Jay Caplan has argued)



FIGURE 7. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Broken Eggs*, 1756. Oil on canvas, 73 × 94 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of William K. Vanderbilt, 1920 (20.155.8). Photographed by Malcolm Varon. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

be identified as a fetishistic structure, “in which the transitoriness of the real world is . . . transformed into an ideal fixity.”<sup>55</sup>

Although *Weeping Girl* parallels the family scenes in its use of an emotionally resonant object to evoke love and loss, there is obviously a fundamental difference between the dead bird and the living one in *Filial Piety*. Similarly, *The Broken Mirror* is distinguished by showing an object that is not just part of a larger whole but itself fragmented. Both testify that the loss is unsalvageable; in Greuze’s earliest treatment of the theme of lost virginity, *The Broken Eggs* (fig. 7), which was exhibited in 1757, this point is reinforced by the presence of a child, who, unable to understand the irreversibility of what has happened, tries to repair the damage.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the symbolic aspect of these signs means that they represent loss only in a veiled fashion, as Diderot teasingly underlined by pointedly refusing to state just what it is that the weeping girl has lost. This very indirection allowed the symbol itself

to be identified as a fallen form of communication; instead of conveying meaning transparently, through the natural language of the body, it signifies conventionally, through the logic of substitution.<sup>57</sup> The veiled meaning of the dead bird and other such symbols may also be read in psychoanalytic terms, thereby transforming them into symptoms of a sexual knowledge that has been repressed.<sup>58</sup> More specifically, the difference between these single-figure paintings and the family scenes could be understood with reference to Freud's essay on mourning and melancholia, which presents the latter as a pathological version of the former. Whereas the loss of a loved one normally results in mourning, melancholia may ensue in cases when the beloved is not dead but departed; in such cases, the lost object is lost to consciousness and grief turns inwards to take the form of a fierce denigration of the subject's own ego.<sup>59</sup> Since the woman disappointed in love figures as the exemplary melancholic in this formulation, Freud's analysis offers close parallels to the weeping girl and her counterpart in *The Broken Mirror*, both of whom, as already noted, Diderot described as melancholy.

The crucial point here is that, whereas *The Marriage Contract* and *Filial Piety* show a natural progression through different stages of the human life cycle, in which mourning is collective and temporary, these single-figure paintings of melancholy young girls depict the transition to adulthood as a crisis that may prove insurmountable. As Mark Ledbury has put it, they "are saturated with regret, stasis and a sense of 'nonpassage,' as well as a strong lament for the past."<sup>60</sup> For eighteenth-century spectators, the obvious reference point would have been the quintessentially sentimental figure of the seduced or lovelorn maiden, who never recovers from her shame and/or broken heart. Richardson's *Clementina*, for example, goes out of her mind as a result of being disappointed in love, as does the best-known figure of this type, Laurence Sterne's "poor Maria," whom French readers first encountered in the translation of *A Sentimental Journey* published in 1769. Dressed in white, leaning her head on her hand and accompanied by a little dog, itself a substitute for a pet goat that "had been as faithless as her lover," she had as intense an emotional effect on the readers of her story as the weeping girl reportedly did on Salon visitors.<sup>61</sup> Just as Maria is repeatedly encountered seated alone in the same spot, so the weeping girl appears isolated and unable to move on. In the absence of any clear-cut indication within the picture that she has been seduced or abandoned, however, her condition could also be construed in medicalized terms as puberty, which the *Encyclopédie* article on the subject defined as "that age in which nature renews itself, and in which it opens its source of feeling."<sup>62</sup> This is effectively how Mathon read the painting when he explained the intensity of the girl's grief over the death of her bird by claiming that she has projected her budding need to love onto a substitute object.

The likelihood of *Weeping Girl* being interpreted in this way can only have increased in the following decades, as medical writers elaborated their understanding of puberty. In books on the subject published in the later eighteenth century, female puberty is presented as at once a wonderful blossoming and a dreadful crisis. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, wrote the author of one such work, Pierre Virard, girls become “pale, dreamy, melancholy, they are fed up with everything,” while, at the same time, they are never so lovely, so loving and so loveable. In characterizing them as delicate flowers, prone to terrible ailments, such authors metaphorize the moral and emotional susceptibility that was supposed to make girls vulnerable both to seduction by unscrupulous men and to losing their mind when disappointed in love. Virard concludes by insisting that “they should never forget that they carry a treasure in fragile vases”; the treasure in question being not simply their virginity but also, in accordance with the populationist priorities of the period, their fertility.<sup>63</sup> This conceptualization of the young girl can be aligned with contemporary medical discourse on melancholy, which classified it as one of the principal forms of mental disorder and attributed it to “sorrow, mental suffering, the passions, and above all love and an unsatisfied venereal appetite”; “young persons” were also said to be especially subject to a peculiarly female malady, namely nymphomania, the first symptom of which was “a melancholy delirium.”<sup>64</sup> Late eighteenth-century notions about the physical, mental, and moral vulnerability of young girls found their most compelling fictional expression in Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s pastoral novel *Paul et Virginie*, published in 1788. Its blond, melancholic (and fatherless) heroine meets a tragic fate set in motion not by a seducer but by the onset of puberty; the novel includes a famous passage describing the languor and other symptoms that start to afflict the adolescent heroine. The burgeoning of sexual desire in Virginie leads to her banishment from the island paradise of her childhood, and eventually to her death, since she drowns attempting to return.<sup>65</sup>

What made Greuze’s weeping girl so moving for a contemporary audience was precisely that she is herself, as the pink flowers pinned to her breast indicate, a fragile blossom, at once so lovely and so vulnerable. As such, her loss, whether or not it was identified with the rupturing of her hymen, encapsulated the threatened status of so much that their culture cherished under the overall rubric of “nature” and saw as being undermined by modern civilization: childhood innocence, feminine beauty, physical health, rural simplicity, and those interior qualities, that emotional life, that was held to constitute the moral essence of humanity itself. Ultimately, the loss that the painting mourns is that of the girl herself; in weeping over her dead bird, she can be seen to stand in for the grief that the spectator would feel for her own death, as in the case of Virginie. The pathos of Greuze’s figure is also heightened by

the fact that she seems to be locked in her own distress and, as such, completely uncomprehending of her plight, even if she has not actually lost her mind like many of her fictional counterparts.<sup>66</sup> Her lack of awareness and consequent helplessness compel the spectator to supply what she lacks: a rational account of her plight that she, in her innocence and distress, is incapable of, potentially in the form of a quasi-medical diagnosis, as in Mathon's case; and to pity her all the more intensely because she is beyond helping, even to the point of seeking to transgress the aesthetic boundaries that put her out of reach, as Diderot does by invading the picture space. He also presents himself as someone able to draw out and articulate the girl's mute suffering; her own contribution to the fictive conversation is represented as consisting almost entirely of tears, sighs, and nods. In seeking to compensate for the lack that constitutes the structuring logic of the painting, both his text and Mathon's instantiate an underlying logic of reception.

To put this another way, the girl's passivity and helplessness make her totally vulnerable to the spectator's fantasy, which may take the form of a paternal attempt to console and help her, as Diderot imagines himself doing. Equally, however, this lack of resistance serves as an invitation to the spectator to transgress the ethical prohibition against taking advantage of her vulnerability by inserting himself in the place of the lover/seducer, as Bernadette Fort has emphasized that Diderot ultimately does.<sup>67</sup> Nor is he alone in responding to this type of figure in a somewhat equivocal manner; Sterne's Maria, for example, is mediated through the gaze of a male spectator, the sentimental traveler Mr. Yorick, who, in pitying her plight, expresses the wish that she "should lay in my bosom and be unto me as a daughter."<sup>68</sup> What holds the spectator back from acting on his desire for the girl, even in imagination, is precisely his self-identification as a man of feeling, an *homme sensible*. For such a spectator, Greuze's painting offers the high-minded, indeed self-congratulatory, pleasure of triumphing over his own base desires, a response exemplified by Mathon's reference to "that sweet and tender sadness that is better than sensual pleasure." To accede to these desires is instead to adopt the persona of the aristocratic libertine, for whom the violation of innocence testified to his freedom from conventional morality; the exemplar of this subject position would, of course, be the marquis de Sade.<sup>69</sup> In acknowledging his own desire for the girl, Diderot reverts to a more licentious persona that he had cultivated in his youth whereas, in his Salon criticism of the 1760s, he generally presented himself as a paternalistic upholder of moral standards. It was to the latter that the type of figure embodied by Greuze's painting primarily appealed, or so Diderot claimed in declaring that, whereas bold sensuality was what caught his eye at eighteen, now he is fifty, "it's the young girl with an air of modesty and decency . . . that attracts my attention and charms me."<sup>70</sup>



Such a reading of *Weeping Girl*, that is to say, the idea that it presents the young girl in such a way as to appeal particularly to a quasi-paternal spectator, is supported by the figure's attitude of frozen grief, which suggests that she is not yet, and may never be, in a fit state to make the passage into marriage.<sup>71</sup> In other words, the image colludes with his desire to keep her for himself rather than hand her over to a young man as morality dictates; this, not lost virginity, is its guilty secret. The painting thus needs to be understood not only in terms of the exchange of women but also, as Nicola Harper has pointed out, of the incest taboo, which underlies it.<sup>72</sup> According to Lévi-Strauss, who here echoes Freud, human society originates with the taboo that, in prohibiting incest, compels men to take their sexual partners from outside their own kin group.<sup>73</sup> However, as feminist scholars emphasize, the taboo is honored in the breach as well as the observance, above all in the case of father-daughter incest, the least discussed variant, precisely because it does not challenge male property rights in women but, on the contrary, accords with the structures of patriarchal power.<sup>74</sup> As Luce Irigaray comments, in response to Freud's contention that the daughter fantasizes being seduced by her father: "It is equally valid to assume that the father *seduces his daughter* but that, because (in most cases, though not all) he refuses to recognize and live out his desire, *he lays down a law that prohibits him from doing so.*"<sup>75</sup> In so doing, he asserts his authority by binding her emotionally to himself. Exemplary in this respect for Irigaray is the analyst father who keeps the hysterical daughter suspended in interminable analysis and thereby evades the obligation to exchange her.<sup>76</sup> This scenario clearly parallels the way *Weeping Girl* functions at once to legitimate and to conceal the male spectator's desire for a girl young enough to be his daughter.

Such a reading of Greuze's painting derives support, moreover, from other works by the artist. Probably not long after he exhibited *Weeping Girl*, he painted a couple of historical compositions in which its incestuous subtext finds more overt expression. *Lot and His Daughters* (fig. 8) is unambiguous, while *Roman Charity* ostensibly celebrates the filial piety of a woman who gave succor to her imprisoned father from her breast (fig. 9).<sup>77</sup> In both cases, it may be noted, the father is absolved of blame since the initiative is supposed to have been taken by the daughters (even if the transgressive character of the subject matter means that a certain ambivalence toward patriarchal authority cannot be ruled out). Also relevant in this context is a composition now usually said to depict Jupiter visiting Aegina, the daughter of a river god, Asopus, but also identified as a representation of the god visiting Danaë, daughter of Acrisius, King of Argos, who, because it was foretold that he would be killed by his daughter's son, imprisoned her in a bronze tower to keep suitors away (fig. 10). Significantly, one of the artist's contemporaries, the comtesse de Genlis mentions a painting of Danaë by Greuze in

FIGURE 8. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Lot and His Daughters*, c. 1767. Oil on canvas, 74 × 80 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. © RMN/Jean-Gilles Berizzi.



FIGURE 9. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Roman Charity*, c. 1767. Oil on canvas, 62.9 × 79.4 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

FIGURE 10. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Aegina Visited by Jupiter* (*Danaë Visited by Jupiter?*), c. 1767. Oil on canvas, 147 × 195.9 cm.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Harry N. Abrams and Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, Pfeiffer, Fletcher, and Rogers Funds, 1970 (1970.295).

Photographed by Malcolm Varon. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





FIGURE 11. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Paternal Kiss*. Engraving. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

her pedagogic novel, *Adèle et Théodore*, published in 1782.<sup>78</sup> Either way, though most obviously in the latter case, the composition dramatizes the patriarch's desire to possess the daughter, whether by keeping her to himself or (since Jupiter is himself a patriarchal figure) by raping her. Most directly parallel to *Weeping Girl* are nonhistorical compositions by Greuze that seem to hint at an incestuous relationship. *Le Baiser paternel*, for example, depicts a father and daughter kissing each other (he, her forehead; she, his hand) in a manner that is technically chaste but suspiciously intimate (fig. 11).<sup>79</sup>

Far from embodying a sexual perversity peculiar to Greuze, these works exemplify a general intensification of the affective bond between father and daughter within late eighteenth-century culture that not infrequently verges on the incestuous.<sup>80</sup> In *Julie*, for example, the specter of incest is invoked, purely hypothetically, near the start. Saint-Preux tells his beloved: "I would shudder to lay a hand on your virginal charms, more than I would at the vilest incest, and your surety is not more inviolate with your father than with your lover."<sup>81</sup> However, as Tony Tanner has shown, Rousseau's novel is haunted by this specter throughout. The irony is that the lover's body is barely present in the text, never really seeming to pose a threat to Julie; rather, it is her father, who, enraged by the prospect of Saint-Preux as a son-in-law, assaults his daughter, as a result of which she falls and hits her head,

causing it to bleed. The scene has strong overtones of incestuous rape, which are compounded by the one that follows, in which the now remorseful father sits Julie on his lap and clasps her in his arms. She recounts that

a certain gravity which he dared not abandon, a certain confusion which he dared not overcome put between the father and his daughter this charming embarrassment that modesty and passion cause in lovers. . . . I threw an arm around my father's neck. I laid my face close to his venerable cheek, and in an instant it was covered with my kisses and bathed with my tears.<sup>82</sup>

The father subsequently marries Julie off to a substitute for himself, a friend his own age, who saved his life. The ideal community that Julie and her husband establish (of which her father is also a member) is a closed family circle, in which contact with outsiders is discouraged and financial transactions avoided. In short, it is based on a rejection of exchange, on a refusal of the separation that marriage generally entails; what drives Julie is, as Tanner says, "a dream of total harmony" that collapses the difference between nature and culture.<sup>83</sup>

It is this kind of regressive fantasy that ultimately distinguishes *Weeping Girl* from *The Marriage Contract*, in which not only does the father hand his daughter over in marriage but, as the prominence of the dowry indicates, the whole composition rests on a valorization of human and financial exchange.<sup>84</sup> In broad historical perspective, such a quasi-incestuous conception of the father-daughter bond may be understood as compensating for the decline of paternal authority and rise of individualism attendant on the growth of a market economy by reinforcing the already docile and loving stereotype of the *jeune fille*, who thus comes to stand for the supposed virtues of the patriarchal family.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, this type of relationship forms part of what Foucault calls the "affective intensification of the family space" from the eighteenth century onwards, such that, within bourgeois society, he argues, "sexuality is 'incestuous' from the start."<sup>86</sup> Undoubtedly, this thesis is of great value in helping to account for the pervasiveness of the theme in late eighteenth-century culture. However, it should also be noted that those texts of the period that explicitly address the question of incest primarily associate it, as *Julie* implicitly does, with a state of nature then believed to have existed prior to civilization, effectively taking a proto-anthropological stance. Rousseau himself seems to take a distinctly nostalgic view of sexual relations as they existed before the incest taboo and the exchange of women: "The first men simply had to marry their sisters. Given the simplicity of the first morals, this usage was perpetuated without drawback as long as families remained isolated."<sup>87</sup> If Rousseau ignores the likelihood of a father-daughter scenario, Diderot's evocation of a natural, pre-incest-taboo sexuality in his *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* includes all possible permutations.<sup>88</sup> In

the work as well as (it seems) the life of Nicolas-Edme Restif de La Bretonne, by contrast, father-daughter incest becomes an overriding obsession; it gives expression to Restif's desire to return to an age of patriarchal authority and presocial innocence, but, at the same time, since he represents such relationships occurring as a result of the corruption and the anonymity of Paris, it also collapses natural innocence into the perversity of modern civilization.<sup>89</sup> In this respect, Restif encapsulates the mixture of nostalgic yearning and perverse desire that underlies *Weeping Girl*.

Like sentimentalism as a whole, *Weeping Girl* ultimately embodies a drive toward fusion; it blurs the boundaries between artwork and audience, fiction and reality, text and image, self and other, eros and pathos, lover and father, nostalgia and perversity.<sup>90</sup> As has been argued here, it is addressed primarily to the repressed desires of the *homme sensible*, offering as it does the illusion of intimacy with the naive and innocent *jeune fille* without any disturbance to the spectator's conviction of his own paternalistic rectitude. Exemplary in this respect is Mathon, who, as we have seen, identifies the girl as a mere child and insists that the painting's appeal is emotional as distinct from sensual. In the context of the Salon exhibition and print culture, the requirements of public decency seem to have precluded any explicitly sexualized interpretation. By reading the painting as an allegory of lost virginity and, even more so, when he admits that he wishes he were the girl's lover/seducer, Diderot not only punctures the hypocrisy involved but also, in so doing, substitutes a libertine perspective that resists the moralizing dictates of the public sphere.<sup>91</sup> As he implicitly acknowledges with his reference to Gessner, however, the power of the image for contemporary spectators derived in large part from the scope it offered for the projection of pervasive concerns about innocence under threat. In this context, the dead bird functioned as a multivalent symbol of loss rather than as a purely sexual one. Above all, *Weeping Girl* speaks to a patriarchal imagination, one that not only seeks to control and contain female sexuality but also frames it within a broader vision of social corruption and potential redemption, as does Chastellux.

At the same time, this kind of vision was subverted by the commercial purpose for which the artist produced this and pretty much every other Greuze girl. Intended for ready sale on the art market, *Weeping Girl* effectively prostitutes the daughter to any number of prospective father figures. The composition circulated widely in the later eighteenth century, though only in engraved form, since the painting itself vanished from public view after the Salon of 1765 and seems not to have resurfaced on the art market during this period; Jean-Jacques Flipart's print of *Weeping Girl* was published in 1767, one of the first of many executed by an engraver under contract to Greuze, who made a fortune by controlling the reproduction of his works.<sup>92</sup> Lacking as it did the fleshly vividness of the original, however, the print may



FIGURE 12. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *A Child Hesitating to Touch a Bird for Fear It Might Be Dead*, 1800. Oil on panel, 68 × 55 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. © RMN/Jean-Gilles Berizzi.

actually have encouraged more innocent readings, such as that offered by Chastellux. Another case in point is provided by Genlis, who concluded an account of a ten-year-old girl's distress at the loss of a cherished pet by remarking: "This picture reminded me of the one by Greuze representing a little girl weeping over the death of her canary."<sup>93</sup> Such obliviousness to the erotic dimension of the subject on the part of a female spectator accords with the sexual double standard upheld by patriarchal morality.<sup>94</sup> However, this kind of interpretative tendency was also endorsed by the artist himself in his final treatment of the theme, depicting a significantly younger girl, exhibited at the Salon of 1800 with the title *A Child Hesitating to Touch a Bird for Fear It Might Be Dead* (fig. 12). One review demonstrates how out of fashion Greuze's work had become by this date:



There is something unnatural about this figure. Gessner has painted with more naivety and grace that repugnance and that sort of fear caused by the spectacle of death when one encounters it for the first time.<sup>95</sup>

Despite his hostility, this critic's remarks reveal a remarkable degree of continuity with earlier responses in the comparison with Gessner and the insistence on grace as well as the literal-minded interpretation of the subject. As I have endeavored to show here, it is worth attending to these interpretative nuances rather than taking for granted that *Young Girl Weeping over Her Dead Bird* is "about" the loss of virginity.

## Notes

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Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

1. Jean-François de Beauvoir, chevalier (later marquis) de Chastellux, *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781 and 1782*, (London, 1787), 1:444–45. For the original, see Chastellux, *Voyages de m. le marquis de Chastellux dans l'Amérique septentrionale dans les années 1780, 1781 and 1782* (Paris, 1786), 1:373.
2. Chastellux, *Travels*, 1:459–60.
3. For the original American edition, which includes only the early sections of his travels and consisted of only twenty-four copies, see Chastellux, *Voyage de Newport à Philadelphie, Albany, &c.* (Newport, RI, 1781).
4. Chastellux, *Travels*, 1:11–12. The most recent analysis of Chastellux's text misrepresents the contrast that he makes here, claiming that he accused American women of "casual amorality"; see Doina Pasca Harsanyi, "How to Make a Revolution Without Firing a Shot: Thoughts on the Brissot-Chastellux Polemic, 1786–1788," *French History* 22, no. 2 (2008):199.
5. For the first documented use of the term, see John Rivers, *Greuze and His Models* (London, 1912), chap. 1: "Of the Greuze Girl." Cf. Edmond Pilon, *J. B. Greuze, peintre de la femme et de la jeune fille du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1912).
6. Chastellux, *Travels*, 1:12–13, 2:124. The English translator added an ironical footnote at Chastellux's expense, commenting that he was far from being the aged and austere figure that he implied.
7. Durand Echeverria, *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815* (Princeton, 1968), esp. 106–14.
8. For the *Pleureuse* appellation, see Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris, 1975–), vol. 14, *Salon de 1765. Essais sur la peinture*, ed. Else Marie Bukdahl, Annette Lorenceau, and Gita May (1984), 184; *Mercure de France* (November 1765): 53; *Johann Georg Wille (1715–1808), Briefwechsel*, ed. Elisabeth Decultot, Michel Espagne, and Michael Werner (Tübingen, 1999), 373 (letter of 19 July 1766).
9. For "the perverse child-woman" (*l'enfance perverse d'une femme*), see Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, "Greuze," in *L'Art du dix-huitième siècle* (Paris, 1881–82), 2:60 (essay on Greuze first published in 1862). Compare the characterization of Greuze's *ingénues* as "démon d'innocence" in Joris-Karl Huysmans, "La Cruche cassée d'après Greuze, par Guillon," *Le Musée des deux mondes* (15 October 1875): 88;

- see also Joris-Karl Huysmans, *A Rebours*, ed. Marc Fumaroli (Paris, 1977), 161. For the *Lolita* connection, see Robert Rosenblum, "The Greuze Exhibition at Hartford and Elsewhere," *Burlington Magazine* 119, no. 887 (1977): 145; Norman Bryson, *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, 1981), 137.
10. Salon *livret* for 1759, no. 107: *Une jeune fille qui pleure la mort de son oiseau. Tableau ovale*. See also Edgar Munhall in *Diderot et l'art de Boucher à David* (Paris, 1984), 241, cat. no. 63 (under "analogies autographes").
  11. Reportedly, when the marquis de Marigny visited the Salon of 1765 and praised *Weeping Girl*, Greuze responded by complaining of lack of work; see Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 184.
  12. Salon *livret* for 1765, no. 110: *Une jeune Fille, qui pleure son oiseau mort. Ce Tableau ovale, de deux pieds de haut, appartient à M. de la Live de la Briche, Introduceur des Ambassadeurs*. On La Live de Jully and his brother, see Colin Bailey, *Patriotic Taste: Collecting Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Paris* (New Haven, 2002), 33–69.
  13. Compare Joseph-Marie Vien's *La Douce mélancolie* (1756), which was commissioned by Mme Geoffrin, whose Monday salon was attended by Caylus, Vien, and Greuze. Compare also Etienne Falconet's statue, *La Douce mélancolie*, which was executed for La Live de Jully; on all these works, see Guillaume Faroult, "La douce Mélancolie selon Watteau et Diderot; Représentations mélancoliques dans les arts en France au XVIIIe siècle," in Jean Clair, ed., *Mélancolie: génie et folie en Occident* (Paris, 2005), 278–81.
  14. For this suggestion, see *Diderot et l'art*, 240, cat. no. 63. Whether or not the bird in Catullus is also a sexual symbol is a matter of continuing debate; for a recent, carefully nuanced argument against this kind of reading, see Arthur J. Pomeroy, "Heavy Petting in Catullus," *Arethusa* 36 (2003): 49–60.
  15. Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 183. All translations from his discussion of *Weeping Girl* are taken from *Denis Diderot: Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, trans. Geoffrey Bremner (London, 1994), 236–39. Although listed in the *livret* (Salon of 1763, no. 139: *Une jeune fille qui a cassé son miroir. Tableau du cabinet de M. de Bossette [sic]*), *The Broken Mirror* was not in fact exhibited; see John Ingamells, *The Wallace Collection: Catalogue of Pictures*, vol. 3, *French before 1815* (London, 1989), 205–7, P442. Diderot must in fact have seen it in Pierre-Louis-Paul Randon de Boisset's *hôtel*, to which he enjoyed privileged access; see Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 16, *Salon de 1767, Salon de 1769*, ed. Else Marie Bukdahl, Michel Delon, and Annette Lorenceau (1990), 391–92.
  16. Elise Goodman, "Les Jeux Innocents': French Rococo Birding and Fishing Scenes," *Simiolus* 23, no. 4 (1995): 251–67.
  17. See Bernard Black, *Vassé's "Bambinelli": The Child Portraits of an Eighteenth-Century Sculptor* (London, 1994), 45–46. For other works of this period featuring young children and birdcages, see Lorenz Eitner, "Cages, Prisons, and Captives in Eighteenth-Century Art," in *Images of Romanticism: Verbal and Visual Affinities*, ed. K. Kroeber and W. Walling (New Haven, 1978), 15–19. Also significant in this context is the boy with a birdcage in Valentin de Boulogne's *Four Ages of Man* (then in the Duc d'Orléans's collection in Paris), which may symbolize the child's soon to be lost innocence; see Humphrey Wine, *National Gallery Catalogue: The Seventeenth-Century French Paintings* (London, 2001), 390–96, NG4919. For bird symbolism more generally, see James Hall, *Subjects and Symbols in Art* (London, 1979), 48, 330.

18. René Démoris suggests that, with *Weeping Girl*, Greuze sought to elevate his work by renouncing “le jeu de complicité et d’allusions grivoises,” but that this was unacceptable to Diderot, for whom “il faut à tout prix . . . ramener la jeune fille et son oiseau dans l’univers masculin où se trouve conjurée une périlleuse autonomie féminine”; Démoris, “L’Oiseau et sa cage en peinture,” in *Esthétique et poétique de l’objet au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Christophe Martin and Catherine Ramond (Pessac, 2005), 43, 46.
19. Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 183.
20. Charles-Joseph Mathon de la Cour, *Troisième lettre à Monsieur \*\*\* sur les peintures, les sculptures et les gravures exposées au Salon du Louvre en 1765* (Paris, 1765), Collection Deloynes, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, no. 110, 3. On the double reading, either perverse or innocent, permitted by the girl’s ambiguous body, see Stéphane Lojkin, *L’Oeil révolté: Les Salons de Diderot* (Paris, 2007), 155–57.
21. J. B. Tollot, “Sur la mort d’un serin,” *Mercure de France* (April 1747): 69–70; Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, “Discours sur la nature des animaux,” *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (Paris, 1749–67), vol. 4 (1753), 84. See also Louise Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots: Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Baltimore, 2002), 124–25, 135–55.
22. Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 183.
23. Mathon, *Troisième lettre*, 5. For similar readings, see *Mercure de France* (November 1765): 53; *Année littéraire* vol. 6 (1765), letter 7 (4 October), 163.
24. I am indebted for this point to Nicola Harper, “The ‘Greuze Girl’ and Gender Identity in Eighteenth-Century France” (MA diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1997), 15–16.
25. Such criticisms focused on the *prix d’expression* founded by the comte de Caylus in 1759; see Melissa Percival, *The Appearance of Character: Physiognomy and Facial Expression in Eighteenth-Century France* (London, 1999), 95–112.
26. Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago, 1980).
27. *Année littéraire*, vol. 6 (1765), letter 7 (4 October), 163; *Avant-Coureur* (1765) no. 36 (9 September), 555; Diderot, *Salon de 1767*, *Salon de 1769*, 472 and 503.
28. *Salon livret* for 1765, no. 116; *Diderot et l’art*, 241–44, cat. no. 64.
29. Claude-Henri Watelet, *L’Art de peindre, poème, avec des réflexions sur les différentes parties de la peinture* (Paris, 1760), 101–2, as translated by Jonathan Mayne in *Art in Theory, 1648–1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger (Oxford, 2000), 687–88. Mayne’s source is C.-H. Watelet and P. C. Levesque, *Dictionnaire des Beaux-Arts* (Paris, 1792), 2:450. However, all the phrases quoted here, apart from the first, also appear in *L’Art de peindre*. Compare also the views of an anonymous writer, who asserts that grace is best personified by a shepherdess making herself a crown of flowers and insists, in opposition to J. J. Winckelmann, that education and reflection are inimical to grace; see “Réflexions sur la grace dans les ouvrages d’art par M. l’abbé Winckelmann,” *Journal étranger* (July 1760): 115.
30. Anne-Claude-Philippe de Tubières-Grimoard de Pestels Levieux de Lévis, comte de Caylus, *Nouveaux sujets de peinture et de sculpture* (Paris, 1755), 21.
31. Mathon, *Troisième lettre*, 4.
32. He also described the painting as the most “interesting” in the Salon; Diderot, *Salon of 1765*, 179, 182.

33. Denis Diderot, "Eloge de Richardson" (1762), in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 13, *Arts et Lettres (1739–1766)*, ed. Jean Varloot et al. (Paris, 1980), 207–8; "Intérêt (littérat.)," *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts, et des métiers par une société de gens de lettres*, ed. Jean Le Rond d'Alembert and Denis Diderot, vol. 8 (Paris, 1765), 819. See Joseph Garver, "The Context of the 'Interesting' Heroine," *English Studies* 63, no. 4 (1982): 318–34; Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 35–37.
34. Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 180.
35. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse*, ed. R. Pomeau (Paris, 1960), 245–46 (part 2, letter 21).
36. *Ibid.*, ci ('Sujets d'estampes'). Within the novel, Julie's lover, Saint-Preux, criticizes a portrait that portrays her in fashionable guise, with rouged face and immodest décolleté; on this text, see Bernadette Fort, "Peinture et féminité chez Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* 104, no. 2 (2004): 385–94. A correspondent of Rousseau told him that Greuze, the only artist capable of rendering "les passions de l'âme," "peint comme vous écrivez"; see Jean-Pierre Preudhomme, letter dated 12 April 1763, in *Correspondance complète de Jean Jacques Rousseau: avril–juin 1763*, ed. R. A. Leigh (Banbury, 1965–1998), vol. 16 (1972), 58 (letter 2615). The writer was a Swiss artist, who had studied with Greuze.
37. On this point, see Bernadette Fort, "Framing the Wife: Jean-Baptiste Greuze's Sexual Contract," in *Framing Women: Changing Frames of Representation from the Enlightenment to Postmodernism*, ed. Sandra Carroll, Birgit Pretzsch, and Peter Wagner (Tübingen, 2003), 96–97. Parallels between the bride and the sentimental heroine were made explicit by Friedrich Melchior von Grimm, who compared her to Richardson's Pamela; see Diderot, *Salons*, vol. 1, 1759, 1761, 1763, ed. Jean Seznec and Jean Adhémar (Oxford, 1975), 145.
38. Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 180.
39. *Ibid.*, 182.
40. On Diderot's friendship with Grimm, the latter's reputation as a man of the world and his role as a repository of his friends' personal secrets, see P. N. Furbank, *Diderot: A Critical Biography* (London, 1992), 80–81.
41. Mathon, *Troisième lettre*, 5. Another point to note is that the authorship of Diderot's reviews was secret while Mathon's bore his name; see Richard Wrigley, *The Origins of French Art Criticism* (Oxford, 1993), 151, 171, 178.
42. Watelet, *L'Art de peindre*, 105–6.
43. Diderot, *Arts et Lettres (1739–1766)*, 135 (from *Correspondance littéraire*, 15 March 1760).
44. Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 179. See also John Hibberd, *Salomon Gessner: His Creative Achievement and Influence* (Cambridge, 1976). One of Gessner's later idylls, published in French as *Glicère*, could be the text that Diderot conjures up here; see Diderot and Gessner, *Contes moraux et nouvelles idylles* ("Londres" [Paris?], 1773), 122–27.
45. Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Towards an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna Reiter (New York, 1975), 157–210; Luce Irigaray, "Women on the Market," in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca, 1985), 170–91; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, 1999), 49–55.
46. It replaced the older term, *garce*, which took on derogatory connotations; see Yvonne Knibiehler et al., *De la pucelle à la minette: Les jeunes filles de l'âge classique*

- à nos jours (Paris, 1983), 9–10, 15–16. The qualifier, “jeune,” is crucial; “fille” on its own could (like *garce*) signify prostitute.
47. Rousseau, *Julie*, 69 (part 1, letter 29). The original title of Greuze’s painting is also significant in this respect. See the Salon *livret* for 1761, no. 100: *Un Mariage, et l’instant où le père de l’Accordée deliver le dot à son Gendre*.
  48. Rousseau, *Julie*, 29 (part 1, letter 12); Nadine Béranguier, “Le ‘dangereux dépôt’: virginité et contrat dans *Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse*,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 9, no. 4 (1997): 447–63. The prevailing obsession with virginity was attacked as an absurd superstition by Buffon; see “De l’homme,” *Histoire naturelle*, vol. 1 (1749), 492–93.
  49. Since what was fundamentally at issue in this system was not the woman’s consent (or lack of it) but rather the offense against male property rights in her body, rape as such was not yet clearly defined; see Georges Vigarello, *A History of Rape: Sexual Violence in France from the 16th to the 20th Century*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 2001), 46–54.
  50. On the way that the narratives of such “feminocentric” novels are overdetermined by a construction of femininity in terms of vulnerability to seduction, see Nancy Miller, *The Heroine’s Text: Readings in the French and English Novel, 1722–1782* (New York, 1980).
  51. Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa or The History of a Young Lady* (London, 1985), 1065 (letter 334). For the French translation of this passage, see *Lettres angloises ou histoire de Miss Clarisse Harlove*, trans. abbé Prévost (Paris, 1751), 5:505 (letter 288).
  52. Margaret Anne Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford, 1974), 206–7, 217. For the broken mirror as a symbol of the fall, see Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, trans. Katherine H. Jewett (London, 2001), 196–97, 246. For a further example, see J. P. Claris de Florian, “Le Miroir de la vérité,” in *Fables de Florian*, ed. L. F. Jauffret (Paris, An IX [1800–1801]), 140–41.
  53. Among Gessner’s idylls is one that shares its title, *La Cruche cassée* (*The Broken Pitcher*), with a slightly later Greuze girl, on which see Hans Körner, “‘Das Mädchen mit dem zerbrochenen Krug’ und sein Betrachter,” in *Empfindung und Reflexion: ein Problem des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Constanze Peres et al. (Hildesheim, 1986), 239–71. For Gessner’s idyll, in which the broken pitcher does not signify lost virginity but rather functions as a generic symbol of loss, see Salomon Gessner, *Oeuvres* (Paris, 1786–93), vol. 1, 37–39. On these tendencies in French literature, see Robin Howells, *Regressive Fictions: Graffigny, Rousseau, Bernardin* (London, 2007).
  54. See Emma Barker, “Putting the Viewer in the Frame: Greuze as Sentimentalist,” in *French Genre Painting in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Philip Conisbee (New Haven, 2007), 111, 118.
  55. Jay Caplan, *Framed Narratives: Diderot’s Genealogy of the Beholder* (Minneapolis, 1985), 18. See also David J. Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France, 1760–1820* (Cambridge, 1994), 78, 81.
  56. Salon *livret* for 1757, no. 112: *Une Mère grondant une jeune Homme pour avoir renversé un panier d’oeufs que sa Servante a apporté du Marché*, Bernadette Fort, “The Greuze Girl: The Invention of a Pictorial Paradigm,” in *French Genre Painting in the Eighteenth Century*, 131–33.



57. The use of allegory and symbol was widely criticized by proponents of a sentimentalized aesthetic from the abbé Du Bos onwards, not least by Diderot, who expressed himself forcibly on the subject of a set of allegories by Louis Lagrenée in 1767, declaring that the symbol was both cold and obscure; see *Salon de 1767, Salon de 1769*, 122. The same hostility to the substitutive logic of signifying systems is of course central to Rousseau's thought; see Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore, 1997), 144ff.
58. See the brief but suggestive remarks to this effect in Anita Brookner, *Greuze: The Rise and Fall of an Eighteenth-Century Phenomenon* (London, 1972), 90.
59. Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), in *The Penguin Freud Library*, vol. 11, *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis* (London, 1991), 251–68. For a reading of *The Broken Mirror* and *Weeping Girl* as exemplary of the melancholic character of art as such, see Sarah Kofman, *Mélancolie de l'art* (Paris, 1985), 20–22; see also 28–30.
60. Mark Ledbury, "Greuze in Limbo: Being 'Betwixt and Between,'" in *French Genre Painting in the Eighteenth Century*, 190.
61. See Lana Asfour, "Movements of Sensibility and Sentiment: Sterne in Eighteenth-Century France," in *The Reception of Laurence Sterne in Europe*, ed. Peter de Voogd and John Neubauer (London, 2004), 9–31. On the iconic pathos of the Maria figure, see W. B. Gerard, *Laurence Sterne and the Visual Imagination* (Aldershot, 2006), 135–60. Also relevant here is the opera, *Nina, ou la folle par amour* (1786), which was based on F. T. M. Baculard d'Arnaud, "La Nouvelle Clémentine," a story itself inspired by Richardson; see Stefano Castelveccchi, "From 'Nina' to 'Nina': Psychodrama, Absorption and Sentiment in the 1780s," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8, no. 2 (1996): 91–112.
62. Louis de Jaucourt, "Puberté (Physiol.)," *Encyclopédie*, vol. 13 (1765), 549.
63. Pierre Virard, *Essai sur la santé des filles nubiles* ("Londres" [Paris?], 1776), 9–10. I owe this reference to Kevin Chua, "Dead Birds, or the Miseducation of the Greuze Girl," in *Performing the Everyday: The Culture of Genre in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Alden Cavanaugh (Newark, 2007), 91n18. See also Jean-André Venel, *Essai sur la santé et l'éducation médicinale des fille destinées au mariage* (Yverdon, 1775), 154–59 (citing Bienville on nymphomania, on which see note 64). On populationism, see Carol Blum, *Strength in Numbers: Population, Reproduction and Power in Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore, 2002).
64. "Mélancholie," *Encyclopédie*, vol. 10 (1765), 308. See also Jan Goldstein, *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 2001), 45–46, 127, 156. For nymphomania, see "Fureur utérine, nymphomania, furor uterinus," *Encyclopédie*, vol. 7 (1757), 37; D. T. de Bienville, *La Nymphomanie, ou Traité de la fureur utérine* (Amsterdam, 1771), as quoted in G. S. Rousseau, *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* (Basingstoke, 2004), 190. See also Mary Sheriff, *Moved by Love: Inspired Artists and Deviant Women in Eighteenth-Century France* (Chicago, 2004), 125–33.
65. The story is a secularized version of the fall of man, with the children explicitly being likened to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; see J. H. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Paul et Virginie*, ed. Robert Mauzi (Paris, 1966), 90, 112, 113.
66. Compare the figure in *The Broken Pitcher*, who, Ledbury has observed, appears "traumatized and uncomprehending"; the sexual initiation that she has just



- undergone, far from teaching her a lesson, “has struck her dumb, stupefied her”; see “Greuze in Limbo,” 191.
67. Fort, “The Greuze Girl,” 140. Fort argues that he disposes of the “imagined lover” by representing the boy as a “callous seducer” who is seen “making merry about his adventure,” thereby allowing the spectator to take his place as the girl’s lover. In so doing, however, she underplays the explicit emphasis in the passage on the boy’s good faith, which is supposed to reassure the girl; see Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 182.
  68. Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, ed. Ian Jack (Oxford, 1984), 116.
  69. The marquis de Sade’s *Justine*, destined to be endlessly violated, embodies just the same type as the Greuze girl and the sentimental heroine; she is characterized as blond and blue-eyed, “d’un caractère sombre et mélancolique,” endowed with “les graces naïves,” and so forth, see Donatien-Alphonse-François de Sade, *Les Infortunes de la vertu*, ed. J. M. Goulemot (Paris, 1969), 51–52 (this first version of the text dates from 1787).
  70. Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, 372, as translated in *Diderot on Art I: The Salon of 1765 and Notes on Painting*, trans. John Goodman (New Haven, 1995), 211. See also Linda Walsh, “‘Arms to be Kissed a Thousand Times’: Reservations About Lust in Diderot’s Art Criticism,” in *Femininity and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Art and Culture*, ed. Gill Perry and Michael Rossington (Manchester, 1994), 162–83.
  71. The likelihood of her not reaching marriage is emphasized in Chua, “Dead Birds.”
  72. Harper, “The Greuze Girl,” 17. Harper’s dissertation is, to my knowledge, the only text to date to have mentioned the incest taboo in connection with this particular painting (and, more specifically, Diderot’s commentary on it).
  73. See Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, trans. James Strachey (London, 2001). For a reading of this text in terms of its relevance to late eighteenth-century French culture, see Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (London, 1992), 6–9.
  74. See, for example, Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 54; Judith Lewis Herman, *Father-Daughter Incest* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 60–62. For an overview, see Ellen Pollak, *Incest and the English Novel, 1684–1815* (Baltimore, 2003), 2–17.
  75. Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, 1985), 38.
  76. On this point, see Jane Gallop, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Daughter’s Seduction* (London, 1982), 70–79. Also pertinent in this context are Irene Fizer, “The Name of the Daughter: Identity and Incest in *Evelina*,” in *Refiguring the Father: New Feminist Readings of Patriarchy*, ed. Patricia Yaeger and Beth Kowaleski-Wallace (Carbondale, 1989), 78–107; Lynda Zwinger, *Daughters, Fathers and the Novel: The Sentimental Romance of Heterosexuality* (Madison, 1991).
  77. On the significance of these compositions for the interpretation of Greuze’s work as a whole, see Régis Michel, “Greuze ou l’inceste,” *Posséder ou détruire: stratégies sexuelles dans l’art d’Occident* (Paris, 2000), 106–7. Bernadette Fort has linked Greuze’s treatment of these highly transgressive themes to his subversion of the academic hierarchy of genres; see Fort, “The Sketch as Transgression: Greuze’s *Roman Charity*,” in *The Ruin and the Sketch in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Peter Wagner (Trier, 2008), 153–77.

78. On this composition, see Mark Ledbury, *Sedaine, Greuze and the Boundaries of Genre* (Oxford, 2000), 170–71. See also Stéphanie-Félicité Ducrest de Saint-Aubin, comtesse de Genlis, *Adèle et Théodore, ou Lettres sur l'éducation*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1782), 1:253.
79. See J. Martin and C. Masson, *Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre peint et dessiné de J.-B. Greuze*, in Camille Mauclair, *Jean-Baptiste Greuze* (Paris, 1906), 19, cat. no. 257. For a similar reading of Greuze's drawing *The Angry Wife*, which depicts the artist himself between his two daughters, see Scott S. Bryson, "Virtue Undone," *Art in America* 78, no. 9 (1990): 209.
80. For other paintings of Roman Charity, see Robert Rosenblum, "Caritas Romana after 1760: Some Romantic Lactations," in *Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art*, ed. Thomas B. Hess and Linda Nochlin (New York, 1973), 43–63. Greuze's exact contemporary, Louis Lagrenée, painted both Roman Charity and Lot and his daughters numerous times; see Marc Sandoz, *Les Lagrenée. 1, Louis-Jean-François Lagrenée 1725–1805* (Paris, 1984), 188, cat. no. 114; 190, cat. no. 118; 203 cat. no. 151; 226, cat. no. 213; 261, cat. no. 329; 272, cat. no. 359, 272–73, cat. no. 360. Vien also painted Lot and his daughters; see Thomas W. Gaehtgens and Jacques Lugand, *Joseph-Marie Vien, Peintre du Roi (1716–1809)* (Paris, 1988), 60, 135, cat. no. 26.
81. Rousseau, *Julie*, 15 (part 1, letter 5). In other novels, the theme of father-daughter incest does become explicit (in the abbé Prevost's *Cleveland*, for example, an important precursor text), but it is always inadvertent, the characters being as yet unaware of their blood tie; see Pierre Fauchery, *La destinée féminine dans le roman européen du dix-huitième siècle, 1713–1807. Essai de gynécomythie romanesque* (Paris, 1972), 150–54. By contrast, in Sade's "Eugénie de Franval" (1800), a father brings up his daughter with the sole purpose of possessing her sexually, see *Les Crimes de l'amour*, ed. Michel Delon (Paris, 1987), 304. In this work, as also in *Cleveland*, a fourteen-year-old daughter rejects marriage out of preference for her father. On the pervasiveness of the incest theme, see Allan H. Pasco, *Sick Heroes: French Society and Literature in the Romantic Age, 1759–1850* (Exeter, 1997), 109–32.
82. Rousseau, *Julie*, 149 (part 1, letter 63). See Tony Tanner, *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression* (Baltimore, 1979), 114ff.
83. Tanner, *Adultery in the Novel*, 148.
84. See Emma Barker, *Greuze and the Painting of Sentiment* (Cambridge, 2005), 46–64.
85. For this type of argument, see Susan Staves, "British Seduced Maidens," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 14, no. 2 (1980–81): 120–22.
86. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (London, 1981), 108–9. On the incestuous dimension of the new model of the family, see also Suzanne R. Pucci, "The Nature of Sibling Incest and Domestic Intimacy in Diderot's *Le Fils Naturel*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no. 3 (1997): 271–87.
87. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essai sur l'origine des langues," in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris, 1995), 5:406; as translated in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Essay on the Origins of Language and Writings on Music*, trans. and ed. John T. Scott (Hanover, NH, 1998), 314. On this passage, see Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 264; Blum, *Strength in Numbers*, 122–52. One might link Greuze's *Broken Pitcher*, which depicts a girl who has apparently been raped

- while getting water from a well, with Rousseau's identification of the well as the location of the first encounters between girls and youths of different families; it could thus be read as a warning to stay safely at home.
88. See Georges Benrekassa, "Loi naturelle et loi civile: l'idéologies des Lumières et la prohibition de l'inceste," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 87 (1972): 115–44.
  89. Peter Wagstaff, *Memory and Desire: Rétif de la Bretonne, Autobiography and Utopia* (Amsterdam, 1996), esp. 112–13, 149–52; Pamela Cheek, "The Festival of Incest in *Le Paysan Pervers*," *Symposium* 60, no. 3 (2006): 134–45.
  90. Barker, *Greuze and the Painting of Sentiment*, 10–11.
  91. On tensions between the private and public in libertine discourse, see Thomas Kavanagh, "The Libertine Moment," *Yale French Studies* 94 (1998): 79–100. Diderot nevertheless respects public decency in identifying the girl as at least fifteen years old, whereas a libertine in the Sadeian mold would know no such restraint; Justine, for example, is only twelve at the outset of *Les Infortunes de la vertu*. On this question, see also Emma Barker, "Imaging Childhood in Eighteenth-Century France: Greuze's Little Girl with a Dog," *Art Bulletin* 91, no. 4 (2009): 437–38.
  92. For the print, see *Diderot et l'art*, 511–12, cat. no. 159. The painting's whereabouts are undocumented between 1765 and 1837, when it was recorded in the collection of General John Ramsay (1768–1846), son of the portrait painter Allan Ramsay; see John Smith, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish and French Painters* (London, 1837), 421, cat. no. 77. It may have been sold to Ramsay by Smith, who records that he had imported from Paris in 1816 another picture by Greuze then in the general's collection and now in the National Gallery of Scotland; see Smith, "Catalogue Raisonné," 435, cat. no. 138.
  93. Genlis, *Adèle et Théodore*, 3:359. Significantly, in view of her resolutely desexualized reading of Greuze's painting, Genlis subsequently wrote to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, praising his novel but objecting to the nascent desire that he attributed to Virginie: "Une jeune fille chaste, innocente et modeste n'a jamais rien éprouvé de pareil," she told him firmly; see Monique Stern, "Lettres inédites de Mme de Genlis à Bernardin de St-Pierre," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 169 (1977): 266.
  94. On female spectatorship of the Greuze girl, see Harper, "The Greuze Girl," 20–21; Fort, "The Greuze Girl," 142. For a further example of a female response to this type of work, see Mlle Dionis, "La Cruche cassée: Conte sur un tableau de M. Greuze," in *Origine des graces* (Paris, 1777), 103–4. Also significant in this context is Mme de Staël's representation of the Greuze girl type in her novel *Corinne* (1807), in which the eponymous heroine is contrasted with her half-sister and rival, the blond, blue-eyed, silent, and passive Lucile; see Toril Moi, "A Woman's Desire to Be Known: Expressivity and Silence in *Corinne*," in *Untrodden Regions of the Mind: Romanticism and Psychoanalysis* (Lewisburg, 2001), 143–75 (Moi explicitly links the character of Lucile to Greuze's *Young Girl Weeping over Her Dead Bird*).
  95. Salon *livret* for 1800, no. 173: *Un Enfant hésitant à toucher un oiseau dans la crainte qu'il ne soit mort*; critic quoted in Brookner, *Greuze*, 86.